



For Immediate Release  
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## **Friends of Friendship Park leader to appear in Federal Court**

Dan Watman was detained and removed from historic border park while attempting to ensure public access now faces trespassing charges

### **CONTACT:**

**Pedro Rios: 619/ 370-5908** director of the American Friends Service Committee, and member of Friends of Friendship Park

**Dan Watman: 619/ 954-9710**, Coordinator of Border Encuentro and member of Friends of Friendship Park

**Dan Watman will be arraigned on Wednesday, June 10, 2009 at 8:30 AM at Federal Court 940 Front Street, he will be available for comments after the hearing.**

On April 8<sup>th</sup> Dan Watman stood in front of earthmovers at Friendship Park on the southwesterly-most corner of San Diego County. In doing so, Dan effectively became the last San Diegan to have public access to Friendship Park, a unique place where friends and families from Tijuana and San Diego have used as a gathering place on this border.

For over a year, local faith, community and educational leaders have come together to prevent the construction of a border wall across Friendship Park and destroying the spirit of friendship that this gathering place has become to symbolize on our shared border.

In recent weeks Department of Homeland Security officials have made public statements that public access to this historic landmark may be restored.

For over six years, Mr. Watman has been organizing multiple events at Friendship Park in order to continue the legacy of friendship that was established at the site when then First Lady Pat Nixon inaugurated the park in 1971.

“I feel like I stood in the way of what was wrong and sent a symbolic message of the importance of friendship,” said Dan Watman an educator and leader of the Friends of Friendship Park, an advocacy group that promotes public access to the unique gathering place in Southern San Diego County.

On May 29<sup>th</sup> the Save Our Heritage Organization presented the prestigious People in Preservation Award, to Friends of Friendship Park for its outstanding advocacy for preserving public access to Friendship Park. The City Council of San Diego joined the Save Our Heritage Organization in recognizing Friends of Friendship Park for its work in defense of public access to our state parks.

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